

COMPARATIVE EVALUATION DESCRIPTOR REVIEW
Working Group Meeting

Minutes of Meeting of 20 April 1983

Attending:

DDA Representative -
DDI " -
DDO " -
DDS&T " -
OP Representative -
and Review Coordinator

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1. The undersigned began by relating the events leading to the formation of the Working Group the first of which was the 1981 Office of Personnel survey on the effectiveness of the then recently established Precepts for Boards and Panels. This led to a question regarding the impetus for change, i.e., which Agency components were seeking the changes and why were they being sought. The response centered around the dissatisfaction on the part of a number of organizations with Category III and for some a problem with a perceived over emphasis on potential at the expense of performance. At this point, and frequently throughout the meeting, discussion of how the system is employed in the various Career Services took place.

2. The possibility of recommending the termination of the current Descriptor System was mentioned but all agreed that it would have to be replaced with another uniform system particularly since some Career Services/ Sub-groups choose not to use a numerical ranking system. On a question regarding the present system's value and benefits the response included some information on the history and evolution of the various mechanisms which led to its adoption. There was also mention of the fact that the Descriptors *will be a* provide background for counseling and serve as a common base. *Some members* expressed the opinion that the counseling often becomes a problem for managers and employees on those occasions when the employee believes he or she should have been in Category I or II and reacts negatively to being placed in Category III.

3. The undersigned called the members attention to the options for potential change of the presently used system which are listed in the background material provided. The possible use of each was explained briefly; one member suggested the Group explore the possibility of establishing a seven category system with inclusion in a category related to an employee's PAR rating.

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4. The desirability of having Descriptors which may be interpreted narrowly and strictly versus a system giving greater flexibility was discussed. While there was no consensus it was agreed that the latter was an issue needing to be addressed. A comment was made about the possibility of excluding the SIS level officers from the currently employed or envisioned system and there was agreement to review that issue. The SIS comment led to the question of the necessity for Boards and Panels spending so much time attempting to determine potential for junior graded employees (those below journey level). There was a feeling that those findings were also not very important to the employee until he or she reaches about the GS-12 level. The undersigned mentioned that the background material contained an item which suggested separate systems for clericals, professional/technical employees through grades GS-11 and for GS-12 and above employees which emphasizes potential.

5. The last substantive issue covered concerned Category III, the employees intended to be included in it and how it might be improved. There was considerable emphasis on the point of how very possible it is for Boards and Panels to logically select employees thought to have potential as well as those thought to have little or no potential and place both in the same grouping. For those Career Services/Sub-groups not using a numerical system in conjunction with the Descriptors the problem is compounded. [It was concluded that Category III is designed to describe too much and too wide a variety of employee; it thus contains too much verbiage.] One member opined that there should be a category which describes an employee simply by using the first sentence of the present Category III. There was general agreement that the Working Group had a task which needed review. It was believed that initially there would be a question of need for substantial changes; if that appeared to be unnecessary the group would probably recommend that some fine tuning be applied to the existing descriptors.

6. In preparation for the next meeting the undersigned suggested each member review the Questions, Issues and Options paper developed by OP/P&PS so that we might discuss and possibly resolve some of the issues in that outline. Also, attendees were asked to determine if, in their Career Service, a feeling existed that the solicitation of additional comments from components would be appropriate; the DDA and DDS&T representatives had earlier stated that they had asked for comments in connection with the Working Group's review.



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